

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----126716 061746Z /47

O 061727Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3830  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE  
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AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 03600

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN-MUZOREWA MEETING

SUMMARY: OWEN AND MUZOREWA MET ON MARCH 6. OWEN OUTLINED WHAT HE SAW AS THE PITFALLS OF THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR THE WHITES COULD ERODE THE GENUINENESS OF A TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY, AND THAT THE CONTINUATION OF SMITH AS PRIME MINISTER AND OF THE RHODESIA PARLIAMENT SEEMED TO POSTPONE A REAL TRANSFER OF POWER UNTIL INDEPENDENCE DAY. OWEN URGED MUZOREWA TO ADOPT A POLITICAL POSITION OF CAUTIOUS REALISM, PERHAPS ASKING THAT SANCTIONS REMAIN UNTIL INDEPENDENCE BUT REQUESTING  
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HUMANITARIAN AID FROM THE UN. OWEN ALSO URGED THAT THE BISHOP BE SEEN AS A "MAN OF PEACE," AND IN THIS CONNECTION RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A UK-US CONFERENCE TO BRING TOGETHER ALL THE NATIONALIST PARTIES. THE CONFERENCE COULD SIDETRACK A UN DEBATE, DISCUSS A CEASE-FIRE, AND PERHAPS BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND THE SALISBURY TALKS.

MUZOREWA LISTENED CAREFULLY TO ALL OWEN HAD TO SAY, BUT WITH LITTLE RESPONSE. ON A POSSIBLE CONFERENCE, HE SAID HE WOULD WANT TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT. END SUMMARY

1. OWEN MET WITH MUZOREWA FOR THREE HOURS THIS MORNING, MARCH 6. THE BISHOP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY NYANDORO AND BULLE, AND ROWLANDS, PALLISER AND GRAHAM ALSO ATTENDED. SEITZ REPRESENTED THE EMBASSY.

2. MUZOREWA HANDED OUT COPIES OF THE MARCH 3 SALISBURY AGREEMENT, AND OWEN BEGAN A LONG DISCUSSION OF THE DOCUMENT POINT BY POINT. HE COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME TERRITORY AS THE TALKS WITH SITHOLE TWO WEEKS AGO, STRESSING HIS VIEW WHERE THE AGREEMENT MIGHT PROVE INADEQUATE AND HOW IT MIGHT FAIL TO WIN OVER INTERNATIONAL OPINION. OWEN POINTED TO THE DANGERS OF THE 28 WHITE MEMBERS FORMING AN OPPOSITION COALITION WITH ANOTHER MINORITY PARTY AND EFFECTIVELY FRUSTRATING THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT. ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS, OWEN EMPHASIZED THAT THE NEGOTIATION OF DETAILS OF THE CONSTITUTION WILL BE CRUCIAL. HE WARNED THAT ON PENSIONS, PROPERTY, THE JUDICIARY, PUBLIC SERVICE, ETC. A SERIES OF SEEMINGLY MINOR CONCESSIONS IN EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES COULD CUMULATIVELY ERODE THE NATURE OF THE AGREEMENT AND CALL INTO QUESTION WHETHER POWER HAD

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INDEED BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE MAJORITY. MUZOREWA MADE LITTLE COMMENT DURING THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS.

3. TURNING TO THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, OWEN EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT THE WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO SUSPECT ANY ARRANGEMENTS IN WHICH SMITH IS A PARTICIPANT. MUZOREWA SAID THAT SMITH HAD EXPLAINED HIS OWN FEAR THAT IF HE LEFT THE SCENE TOO EARLY, A WHITE BACKLASH COULD UNDERMINE AND PERHAPS REVERSE THE SETTLEMENT. THE BISHOP ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SMITH WOULD DEPART THE POLITICAL SCENE AFTER THE WHITE REFERENDUM. OWEN OBJECTED THAT THE USE OF THE TERM "PRIME MINISTER" AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT WOULD APPEAR TO LEAVE "LEGAL" POWER IN WHITE HANDS UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF THE INTERIM PERIOD. IN EFFECT, A TRANSFER OF POWER WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL THE DAY OF INDEPENDENCE, AND THIS WOULD FORESTALL PRIOR INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE.

4. THE BISHOP SAID THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS IN THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL HAD NOT YET BEEN DISCUSSED. A WHITE AND BLACK MINISTER WOULD EQUALLY "SHARE RE-

SPONSIBILITY" IN EACH MINISTRY. OWEN UNDERLINED THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 03600

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

IMPORTANCE OF EITHER A MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE REPRESENTA-  
TIVE HOLDING THE BLACK HALF OF A DEFENSE AND LAW AND  
ORDER PORTFOLIOS, AND THAT THE CURRENT WHITE MINISTERS  
NOT BE RETAINED.

5. OWEN ASKED IF THE DECEMBER 31 DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE  
WERE FIXED. HE SAID HE DOUBTED SANCTIONS COULD BE  
LIFTED BEFORE INDEPENDENCE AND THAT THE FINANCIAL SITUA-  
TION OF THE COUNTRY IS CLOSE TO DESPERATE. BULLE/  
ANSWERED THAT THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING WITH SMITH  
THAT IF THE PROCESSES OF TRANSITION CAN BE ACCELERATED  
(E.G. DRAFTING OF CONSTITUTION, REGISTRATION, DEMARKA-  
TION, ETC.), THEN THE INDEPENDENCE DATE COULD BE AD-  
VANCED.

6. OWEN THEN BROUGHT UP THE CURRENT POLITICS AT THE  
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UNITED NATIONS, EXPLAINING THE UNDESIRABILITY OF A UN DEBATE AND HIS LONG-TERM RESISTANCE TO A SELECTIVE DISCUSSION OF RHODESIA IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. RESPONDING TO A REMARK BY NYANDORO WHO ASKED IF UN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE AVAILABLE DURING THE INTERIM, OWEN SAID HE DOUBTED IT, BUT THE REQUEST WOULD BE AN ATTRACTIVE POLITICAL POSITION FOR THE BISHOP. MUZOREWA COULD EFFECTIVELY ARGUE IN NEW YORK THAT SANCTIONS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED UNTIL INDEPENDENCE BUT AT THE SAME TIME ASK FOR HUMANITARIAN AID. THIS LINE WOULD KEEP SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN SMITH AND THE BISHOP. OWEN WAS TAKEN WITH THIS IDEA AND REFERRED TO IT THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING.

7. MUZOREWA ASKED WHETHER BRITAIN WOULD BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT. OWEN DESCRIBED BRITAIN'S ROLE AS NEITHER CONDEMNING NOR ENDORSING THE AGREEMENT, BUT THAT IT COULD POSSIBLY HELP IN ARRANGING A CEASE-FIRE. IF THERE WERE A CONFERENCE UNDER UK-US CHAIRMANSHIP, IT COULD AVOID A UN DEBATE AND ALSO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR MOVING THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT ON TO COMMON GROUND. OWEN URGED THE BISHOP THAT HE SHOULD BE SEEN AS THE "MAN OF PEACE," WILLING TO TALK TO ANYONE ABOUT A CEASE-FIRE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SHOULD SHOW REALISTIC CAUTION ABOUT HIS OWN PROGRESS IN SALISBURY (E.G. URGE THAT SANCTIONS CONTINUE UNTIL A FINAL TRANSFER OF POWER). THE PATRIOTIC FRONT MIGHT REFUSE TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE, BUT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY DAMAGING FOR THE BISHOP TO DO SO.

8. MUZOREWA SAID HE HAD ALWAYS HELD THE DOOR OPEN TO THE OTHER NATIONALISTS AND HAD ORIGINALLY PROPOSED THE

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GENEVA PARTICIPANTS FOR THE SALISBURY TALKS. NOW, HOWEVER, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS CONDEMNING HIM AS A TRAITOR. OWEN SAID THAT THE FRONT COULD NOT JOIN THE SALISBURY TALKS DIRECTLY. THIS WOULD BE TOO HUMILIATING. THEY MUST BE ABLE, IN A DIGNIFIED MANNER, TO REENTER DISCUSSIONS WITH ALL THE PARTIES. "IF THEY REFUSE, THE FAULT IS CLEAR," BUT THE BISHOP MUST BE SEEN TO BE SEEKING PEACE. A CONFERENCE WOULD NOT ASK THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO GO BACK ON WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED IN SALISBURY, BUT RATHER, TO EXPAND IT.

9. MUZOREWA SAID THAT KAUNDA AND NKOMO HAD PROVEN TO BE THE REAL OBSTACLES TO A SETTLEMENT. WITH MUGABE, HE SAID, "WE HAVE REMAINED OPEN," AND HE HAS NEVER DENOUNCED HIM. THERE HAVE EVEN BEEN REQUESTS FROM GUERRILLAS THAT HE AND MUGABE WORK TOGETHER. ON THE CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, MUZOREWA SAID HE WOULD LIKE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.

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## Message Attributes

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